



HARFORD COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Meeting Minutes From November 4, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Robert Brown at 6:30 PM.

Attending: Hayden Anthony, Bob Brown, Lisa Brown, Jennifer Button, Ryan Koch (representative for Councilman Johnson), Art Kaff, Dennis Miller, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Mike Ray, Pam Silcox, CPT Belton (representing COL Casiano, APG Garrison).

Excused: Scott Kearby, Bill Montgomery, Denise Perry, Janice Cassady

Guests: Simon Ballard (HCCDCP), Darryl Jacobs, Quentin Johnson, John Wagner

Pledge of Allegiance lead by Robert Brown

Opening Prayer given by Deacon Vic Petrosino

Welcome & Opening Comments:

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements and welcomed members and guests.

Mission: *To advocate for our veterans and their families and connect them to resources through outreach and education.*

Vision: *A Harford County community that is responsive to the needs of Veterans and their families.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes from the October 7, 2021, meeting were approved. Art Kaff made the motion to approve, and Pam Silcox seconded the motion. Ryan Koch added that he has been able to post the minutes and agendas to the website.

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

- **MOAA Community Project Update** - Jennifer Button reported that the entries for the Poster and Essay contest have been judged & awards will be presented to students in the following categories: K-2nd grade, 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade. An additional category was developed for entries from students in 12+ grade at John Archer School. Winners will be invited to attend the Veterans Resource Fair & receive their awards during the opening ceremony.

- **Veterans Virtual Wall** (<https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/927/James-V-McMahan-Commission-on-Veterans-A>) – Hayden Anthony reported the virtual photo gallery to honor veterans continues to grow with currently over 130 veterans featured on the scrolling gallery. All veterans are invited and encouraged to submit a photograph & complete the information form (<https://tinyurl.com/hpu89cf3>) to be included in this gallery which can be viewed throughout November.
- **Resource Guide 2021-22** – Robert Brown reported the guide is posted on the website
- **Veterans Resource Fair** – November 13th from 10 AM – 1 PM at Bel Air Armory
 - Theme: “From Awareness to Action” – focus on Mental Health
 - 11 vendors at fair, including VA benefits, claims, healthcare, VSO’s
 - Set-up begins at 7:30 AM & Opening Ceremony at 10 AM
 - Veterans & their families can attend the fair inside the Armory or pick-up information & lunch through a drive through option available outside the armory.
 - Masks will be required inside the armory
 - Grab & go lunch will include a sandwich from Mission BBQ, water, chips & a cookie (provided by Lion’s Club & Knights of Columbus).
 - APGFCU will be the event sponsor & give out a grand prize of a big screen TV & three gift cards (\$250 each).

NEW BUSINESS

- Legislative Issues – Robert Brown reported the VA hired 1000’s of additional claims processors to reduce the time to process both initial claims and appeals. He also noted Executive Order signed on 11-3-21 in reference to Suicide Awareness & Prevention.
- Legal Issues. None.
- Programs and Outreach
 - VAMHCS COVID 19 Booster and Flu Shot walk-in clinic November 11th – Baltimore VA, includes veterans that are not enrolled in VA healthcare (& their spouses)
 - Supporting Our Military and Veteran Caregivers webinar, November 16th, 1:30-3:00. Participants will discover tools and resources available to promote wellness for our service members, Veterans, and their caregivers.
 - SBA Hour with Veterans – November 16th, 11am-12pm. Veterans Business Development Office, SBA programs and services that are offered to veterans. To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sba-hour-with-veterans-tickets-195853943417>
 - Central MD Veterans Collaborative (Virtual). Tuesday, November 9th, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm. Discuss local resources that contribute to the mental and physical wellbeing of our local military-connected community. Open to all Maryland veterans.
- Assistance requests received during the past month – several requests received by Councilman Johnson’s office & referred to Veterans Commission for action/follow-up.
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council
- Public Events and Recognition
 - Alfred B. Hilton Breakfast – Ames United Methodist Church, Bel Air at 9 AM
 - Wreaths Across America mobile education unit, Wednesday, November 10th from 10 AM – 6 PM in the Macy’s Parking lot at Harford Mall. Sponsored by DAR.

- Wreaths Across America Day December 18th at Bel Air Memorial Gardens
 - Marine Flag Raising and Grab & Go Breakfast November 10th, 8 AM at the County Building, 220 South Main, Bel Air
 - Veterans Appreciation Day – American Legion Post 17 (Edgewood) November 10th from 12-6 PM for first responders. Sponsored by the Sheriff's Office with focus on homeless veterans.
 - Veterans Day Mass - St. Joan of Arc, Aberdeen, November 11th at 8:30 AM
 - Havre de Grace Veterans Day Parade – November 11th at 1 PM, Hutchins Park
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council. None.

MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jennifer Button noted the HCPL Veterans Book Club will restart in-person meetings soon. The book club has met virtually for the past 1 ½ years.
- Art Kaff mentioned that he posted several items on Facebook including the Veterans Resource Fair, Veterans Day events & ceremonies, as well as resources to help veterans during these trying times.
- Lisa Brown stated the proposed HCPS calendar for SY 2022-23 does not recognize Veterans Day as a holiday with schools & offices closed. It lists November 11th as an early dismissal for students only. She encouraged commission members to go to the HCPS.org website & respond to the request for calendar input NLT November 26th.
- Mike Ray stated the tax exemption for military pay was discussed at the Army Alliance Board Meeting. Board members are optimistic that some increment to the exemption will be approved this year & will include military, police, fire & other first responders.
- Deacon Vic said the hospital ministry continues at Upper Chesapeake hospital; and he presided over one veteran funeral in the past month – a US Army Air Corps veteran (100 years old).

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2021. Information will be presented with the agenda on any specific meeting requirements.
- Meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month unless otherwise announced.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.